

## TOWARDS ACHIEVING QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

Looking at our education, system closely, one would conclude that the quality of education has gone down drastically due to the lack of provision of funds which includes both recurrent and expenditure to Colleges of Education.

The mass recruitment of teachers who are not motivated, the overcrowdedness of classrooms, lack of enough staff rooms, the introduction of Pre-NCE and Sandwich programmes in the Colleges of Education help to produce unqualified teachers for our learning primary and secondary schools.

Poor management of teacher training institutions also helps to bring down the desired quality in teacher education in Nigeria, as seasoned academics were reported to have a mass exodus to other more lucrative sections of the economy. Non-payment of salaries' and allowances for teachers by individual Colleges of Education or the NCCE or both also frustrates the efforts of teachers to teach properly in their respective schools.

### **Introduction**

Education is the acceptable norm of bitetal importance imparting from one generation to the next which cannot be achieved without qualified, competent and professional teachers who will surely deliver the goods.

Looking at our educational system closely, one would conclude that the quality of education has gone down drastically since the provision of facilities such as teaching materials and equipments diminished, coupled with the current overcrowded classrooms make the quality of teaching and teachers still much lower. The advent of secret cults in the institutions of learning along with the indiscipline of students, drug addiction and examinations malpractice make the issue of teacher education, instead of rising above the quality of the old days, fall below the quality, thus.

It is therefore important to understand the concept of teacher education in any educational system (Mboki, 2000).

### **Concept of Education**

A teacher is an educator whose duty it is to see to the overall development of his students academically, socially and physically.

The two main components of education are of course, the teaching and learning. The job of the teacher is, therefore, to "educate". Education is a Teacher's a process of fostering, nurturing, cultivating a process. All these words mean that it expresses the different levels which education aims to cover.

Etymologically, the word education means just a process of leading or bringing up. Whenever we have the outcome of the process in mind, we speak of education as shaping, formulating activity, that is formulating standard form of activity.

Nevertheless, there are certain components of education which are common to all societies and cultures. Where education is considered to be the perception of an individual to life <?r his socio-political and cultural environment, others regard it to be the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of which a person develops his ability, skills and attitude, and other forms of behaviour with positive value in the society in which he lives (Okome, 2002).

### **Bottle -Necks to the Process of Quality Teacher Production: The Introduction of Remedial and Pre-NCE Programmes**

The quality of teacher education for Nigerian secondary schools is affected by the introduction of REMEDIAL AND PRE-NCE courses. After the phasing out of Grade II programme, the 3-year post junior

secondary school was introduced to supply students for admission into various Colleges of education and Universities to read educational courses. The Colleges of Education hardly get qualified Post-Junior Secondary leavers to fill in the required number of students in some departments, especially sciences.

In an attempt to tackle this problem, however the Remedial and Pre-NCE courses were introduced. This has brought secondary dropouts as well as some students who had not aspired to be teachers but who could not gain admission into other tertiary institutions to come into colleges of education as a last resort. Some use it as a stepping stone to other professions. This helps to leave teaching profession in the hands of uncommitted, unmotivated and incompetent teachers (Omu, 2000).

### **Inadequate Funding of Teacher Institutions**

Funds are inadequately available to the Colleges of Education and Universities inspite of rising cost of educational materials and facilities. If the government provides textbooks, equips the laboratories, and libraries fully, provides enough furnished classrooms and qualified dedicated teachers, there will be expected quality education.

### **Poor Management of Teacher Training Institutions**

According to Ugbe and Ugbe (1977), poor teacher education results form poor teacher management which is also the cause of the mass exodus of seasoned and qualified academics to other lucrative sectors of the economy or even to a more varied economy abroad.

### **Mal-Administration of Teacher Training Institutions**

The institutions are sometimes closed down due to industrial action by the staff following lack of agreements between the staff and the administration over staff welfare or over payments of arrears of salaries and allowances. Closure of these institutions is sometimes due to students' unrest or secret cult activities. Thus, giving room for poor quality teacher preparation in Nigeria.

### **Poor Orientation of Teachers During Preparation**

It is no doubt that teachers are not more knowledgeable or just little knowledge than their students. For the quality of students' learning is related to the quality of teachers' learning which is also associated with the quality of teachers' preparation in the College of Education and the Universities. Teacher Education should be focused on thinking and problem-solving rather than content only, and that rote learning be discouraged to the barest minimum (Omu, 2000).

### **Limitations of the Teacher**

There is, no doubt, that it is in the person of the teacher that all aspects of education are harmonized. It is always early to determine the successes of teachers in making their pupils learn successfully because the factors that shape human behaviour are many and complex. Technically, the aspect of teacher evaluation should focus on the ability of the teacher evaluation should be inculcated in his pupils an accepted social behaviour as manifested in real life situations of the society into which he finds himself.

This idea is hard to realise since the stimuli which impinge upon the pupils are too numerous, subtle and long-running to be measured and attributed solely to a particular teacher. The results of his teaching, are not immediately apparent, and it is always difficult tell whether pupils' behavioural changes are the results of the teachers' influence or that of the other factors.

The conditions of service for teachers are not favourable enough, at the same time there is the problem of lack of adequate materials and conducive teaching and learning environment added to the poor attitudes to learning by both teachers and students (Ellah and Ummana, 2000).

A visit to most Nigerian public schools will reveal a ratio of one teacher to 80-150 students per class. The experience is nauseating at a school in Ojodu, Lagos, where there were 150 pupils in a class, the pupils sat on the bare floor and wrote on their laps in a classroom without ceiling, during the visit of the honourable Minister of Education in 1994. In this school, there were no chairs for teachers.

Somewhere in Kano state, the G.S.S. Sharada, bears exactly the same situation today. Somewhere

in Abia State, the minister discovered that the assembly Hall was used as classroom. Fourteen different classes sharing the seven chalkboards were held at the same time in the hall. Two different classes held with two different teachers teaching different subjects before one chalkboard.

In Taraba state classes were held under the tree with chalkboards nailed to tree trunks. The day it rains the children were dismissed as reported by the school head master.

The teaching profession is not usually granted the social respect accorded to other professions. Teachers, like any other workers want to provide reasonable comfort for their families and to enjoy good standard of living on retirement, which are both absent today. Teachers' housing conditions and prospects for promotion are both negative in the primary schools.

It is the duty of the ministry or the boards to provide furniture, equipment, books and expandable materials available to schools. Their inadequately constitutes another source of frustration and disillusionment among teachers.

All these conglomerate to make a healthy intellectual environment impossible yet the Nigerian society expects the teacher to function very well, an assumption of educational planners who take no cognizance from the assertion of lack of books, materials, furniture and staff classrooms, that any falling in educational standards the teachers are to blame (Esu, 2000).

### **Suggestions on Achieving Quality in Teacher Education in Nigeria**

It is undoubtedly known that teacher education has not got the quality it deserves so as to be able to fulfil the objectives set out clearly in the National Policy on education. The NCCE should, in all its dealings with institutions, whether it be over funds, accreditation etc be fair and firm. It should not compromise accountability as poor quality in teacher education will be a national disaster.

There should be provision for in-service training for teachers. Where it is existing it should be improved especially the financial benefits aspects on the part of the teachers.

Pre-NCE and Sandwich programme should be handled with great care. Ugbe and Ugbe (1997) cautioned that the craze to hurriedly transform Sandwich to NCE graduates should be closely monitored to ensure high standards.

Government must provide funds to run the Colleges of Education properly in terms of salary payments and execution of capital projects for the achievement of quality education.

Colleges of Education should see their job from that of the traditional perspectives. Colleges of Education, unlike the universities should entirely be devoted to education of teachers. The tempo, planning organization and programming should aim at achieving one major objective - the education and production of teachers.

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